

Curriculum Exit-based Career Counselling Module for Senior High School Students

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Abstract:

The increasing demands of the global workforce and the growing needs of 21st century learners necessitate schools to produce holistically developed graduates equipped with skills that will enable them to be ready to face life's challenges. Such reforms allow learners to become ready for higher education, middle-level skills development, entrepreneurship, and employment, dubbed as the four Senior High School (SHS) curriculum exits. In this context, the study assessed the awareness of students on the said curriculum exits and evaluated the implementation of career guidance services such as career information, career education, career counselling, employment counselling, and job placement in schools. The study made use of descriptive research design. Results showed that most students are moderately aware on the four curriculum exits. The school administrators, teachers and students believed that guidance services are moderately implemented; hence, their assessments differed on the implementation of the said services. Finally, the researchers prepared a self-help module entitled "Career Counselling Module for 21st Century Learners" which is intended to make students more enlightened on what to do and where to go after SHS.

Keywords: *Career counselling module, career guidance program, guidance services, SHS curriculum exits*

I. INTRODUCTION

The primary task of any educational system is to give learners the right tools and provide them with a critical mind, so that they can ask the right questions and make the right choices during and after their academic journey. They are trained to acquire new 21st century competencies such as information and technology skills, global awareness, and civic and economic literacy, which have become a standard part of the educational foundation. As a result, the definition of what it means to be educated and be competitive has changed and continues to change.

For its part, the Philippine educational system has responded by going through several reforms to address the growing needs of the dynamic nature of modern learners. Such reforms have provided meaningful opportunities for students to acquire innovation, media and technology, communication, and life skills that are embedded in the new SHS curriculum, which serves as an essential step in improving the Philippines' global competitiveness and making it at par with international standards.

It is stated in DepEd Memo No. 169, s. 2018 that after gaining sufficient knowledge, skills, and attitude, learners are given the chance to choose the curriculum exits they will be pursuing after graduation namely, higher education, middle-level skills development, entrepreneurship, and employment. Whatever curriculum exit SHS graduates pursue is their own decision; hence, it is therefore the duty of the school and career guidance advocates to help them in making the right decisions. In view hereof, career guidance becomes an integral part of student development for it aims to help them make more informed and better educational and career choices. Republic Act No. 9258 or the Guidance and Counselling Act of 2004 mandates that guidance and counselling services must be relevant, efficient, and effective for the development and enrichment of an individual's life. The fact that career guidance in schools remains one of the vehicles that connects learners with the right opportunities based on their personal assets, it allows them to explore and put their potentials into judicious use in today's competitive environment [1].

Despite the myriad of opportunities provided by career guidance programs for students, the researcher has observed

that most students still take CGPs for granted. This is evident in their seemingly declined interest in activities related to career preparation and decision-making. Poor participation in CGPs may affect the way students make career decisions based on their personality traits, thus resulting to competency mismatch. The students' inadequate preparation and their inability to match their personality with occupational environment impede the way they utilize their potentials to attain higher productivity in life.

The researchers believes that aside from providing quality basic education, it is imperative for any school to fortify its efforts in giving learners the opportunities to apply the competencies acquired in formal education into their future career or other professional endeavors. Consequently, it is essential to emphasize the need for SHS students to be provided with relevant and adequate career guidance and counselling.

It can be argued that one of the main problems of young graduates is not finding a job, but rather getting a job that is stable and appropriate for them, their needs, their attitude, and their skill set. Hence, by providing a suitable and timely identification of students' career needs through counselling activities, the apparent issues and challenges may be addressed. The foregoing discussions and these realizations motivated the researcher to pursue this study.

In a noble attempt to help learners decide on career pathways and choose curriculum exits before they graduate from SHS, DepEd introduced CGP Modules for Grades 11 and 12. As indicated in DepEd Memo No. 169, s. 2018, these modules are intended to apply academic and employment readiness skills in work-based learning situations such as internships and mentoring, and determine a clear directional exit after SHS.

Specifically, the modules designed for Grade 11 students focus on different career choices, the factors affecting the fulfilment of a dream/goal, and the skills required of a profession. The modules for Grade 12, on the other hand, feature the relationship of the students' academic achievement to life and career success, as well as the importance of making informed choices and decisions.

Although curriculum exits-related concepts are integrated in one of the provided CGP modules, there is no existing module designed to enhance the learners' awareness on the nature of the various exits they may take after SHS. As such, the researcher found the necessity to conduct this study, with the end goal of developing a career counselling module based on the curriculum exits. Making the students more enlightened on what to do and where to go after SHS is one way of addressing problems related to career and skills mismatch among graduates and young professionals. This may also serve as a supplemental material that could augment the activities and concepts provided in the modules prepared by DepEd.

II. OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to:

1. Determine the extent of awareness of students with reference to the following curriculum exits:
 - 1.1 higher education;
 - 1.2 middle level skills development;
 - 1.3 entrepreneurship; and
 - 1.4 employment.
2. Differentiate how the school administrators, teachers and students assess the following guidance services:
 - 2.1 career information;
 - 2.2 career education;
 - 2.3 career counselling;
 - 2.4 employment counselling; and
 - 2.5 job placement.
3. Find out if there are significant differences in the assessments by the three groups of respondents.
4. Prepare a curriculum-exit based career counselling module.

III. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was utilized with self-constructed questionnaire as major data gathering tool. To validate the responses, focus group discussions and interviews were also conducted. Respondents were 392 Grade 12 students, 318 SHS teachers and 188 school administrators from selected public SHSs in Batangas Province. Weighted and composite mean and F-test (ANOVA) were the statistical tools used to analyze the data.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Awareness of Students to Curriculum Exits

A career pathway is a series of structured and connected education programs and support services that enable students to advance over time to better jobs and higher levels of education and training [2]. Contextually, it was adapted and dubbed as curriculum exits alongside with the implementation of K to 12 Program. Table 1 presents the extent of awareness of students to the four SHS curriculum exits.

TABLE 1
Students' Awareness to Curriculum Exits

<i>Curriculum Exit</i>	<i>Composite Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
Higher Education	3.43	Moderately Aware
Middle Level Skills Development	2.89	Moderately Aware
Entrepreneurship	2.91	Moderately Aware
Employment	2.93	Moderately Aware

As seen on the table, the students are moderately aware on the nature, characteristics, and benefits of higher education as a curriculum exit. It is evident on the obtained composite mean of 3.43. It clearly shows that most of the students are choosing higher education because they are conscious with the personal, professional and career gains brought by this curriculum exit. Perhaps, higher education provides avenues for intellectual advancement and opportunities for skills development. It indicates that students consider it as one of the best outlets for them to be successful in the future. It also allows them to be prepared in the world of work. Higher education institutions train individuals to be equipped with minimum skills required for employment [3].

The respondents manifest similar assessments in regard to middle level skills development as evident on the obtained composite mean of 2.89. It appears that students recognize the importance of venturing in this curriculum exit to their career development. The researchers assume that students who are choosing this career pathway are those who seek for immediate employment. Given the fact that middle level skills development provides sufficient technical and vocational skills, it is imperative for students to be fully aware on the nature and processes entailed in this pathway. Venturing in to middle level skills development is also a great move in making Filipino skilled worker more competitive. Hence, there is a need to make the workforce meet the diverse needs of the economy through proper technical and vocational skills training [4].

The students are likewise moderately aware on how entrepreneurship will help them in improving their skills relative to developing, organizing and managing a business venture as reflected in the generated composite mean of 2.91. Along with these skills, they must also be trained to take risks, decide wisely and make informed decision about their finances; thus, leading them to become financially literate [5]. It clearly denotes that students who will pursue this career pathway should be prepared with knowledge, skills and attitudes required to become effective young entrepreneurs. Presumably, the enabling activities and learning experiences of K to 12 Curriculum are great help in putting these ideas into actions.

Meanwhile, employment receives the same level of awareness from the respondents. The obtained composite mean of 2.93 suggests that students recognize how this curriculum exit helps them in clarifying their immediate employment goals, understanding and accessing possible job and training opportunities, and learning the skills needed to look for and maintain employment. It indicates that they are aware on how employment will assist them in understanding and matching their interests, aspirations and skills and competencies to their desired occupations and/or jobs. Thus, employment must help individuals to recognize and value

their abilities and potentials and match them to the demands and competencies required in the world of work [6]

B. Assessments of the School Administrators, Teachers and Students to Guidance Services

The main purpose of guidance is to assist individuals in the exploration of their complex needs, to make greater sense of their current situation and to build confidence in their ability to complete the review process and move forward from the point at which they seek help [7]. Regarded as a program, career guidance comprises several interconnected activities aiming to help individual learners to make wise and informed decisions about their future career. As shown in Table 2, school administrators, teachers and students believed that activities for career information are moderately implemented in schools.

TABLE 2
Assessments on Guidance Services

Guidance Services	Composite Mean			Verbal Interpretation
	SA	T	S	
Career Information	3.03	3.45	3.36	Moderately Implemented
Career Education	2.94	3.35	3.31	Moderately Implemented
Career Counselling	2.92	3.35	3.32	Moderately Implemented
Employment Counselling	2.86	3.34	3.29	Moderately Implemented
Job Placement	2.76	3.28	3.27	Moderately Implemented

Legend: SA – School Administrators T – Teachers S – Students

The obtained composites mean of 3.03, 3.45 and 3.36 suggest that schools are providing sufficient career information for students in order for them to have a better understanding of the nature and features of the career they will pursue in the future. However, areas such as provision of information about labor market trends and conditions and coordination with external stakeholders must be given consideration to ensure effective delivery of career information to students. The researchers affirm that the activities implemented in schools must help students understand their skills and career paths and acquaint them to future employment opportunities necessary for their career development. Perhaps, providing enough career information will help students in making informed career decisions [8].

Similarly, the three groups of respondents agreed that career education is moderately implement in schools. The corresponding composite means of 2.94, 3.35 and 3.31 indicate that schools are helping their students develop the knowledge and skills they need to choose and pursue a career

path. However, there is a need to integrate career education in various school operations such as work immersion and other school-related activities. The conducted interviews with the respondents also reveal that schools must support students in their career decision by means of intensifying the involvement of parents, alumni and other stakeholders in the conduct of CGP. Career education provides students with opportunities to explore a variety of careers and options for their future [9]. Through effective career education, students will better understand their career pathway.

The activities and initiatives for career counselling are also moderately implemented in schools according to the administrators, teachers and students based on the generated composite means of 2.92, 3.35 and 3.32. It reveals that the respondents assert that they are responsive in providing the counselling needs of the students related to the skills and competencies needed to be successful in their aspired career. It further indicates that schools considers that nature and needs of the students, especially those who are in the adolescent transition. However, the provided career counselling in schools must be inclusive and participatory so as to address current issues relating to students' career needs. Students must be engaged in career counselling process must since they are the ones who make appropriate career choices for them [10].

Employment counselling is likewise moderately implemented in schools as reflected on the obtained composite means of 2.86, 3.34 and 3.29. It reveals that school administrators, teachers and students, themselves believed that they are taking their valuable part in making them more aware on the nature and characteristics of the employment opportunities after SHS. As career advocates, the researchers believes that they are providing services for students to be aware on how their current skills and aptitudes will be useful in seeking for a job. The effectiveness of a school based-CGP depends on how advocates are making skills and competencies of students suitable and necessary to achieve their personal aspirations and career success [11]. Perhaps, the role of school administrators and teachers in providing employment counselling is to help students be acquainted with their future careers while focusing and relating it with their needs and interests.

The school administrators, teachers and students assessed that the activities related to job placement are moderately implemented in schools as reflected on the obtained composite mean of 2.76, 3.28 and 3.27. It implies that the schools are actually doing their best to provide preparatory and complementary job-seeking related services such as referral system and job fairs for students. However, there must be an established partnership and linkage with employment agencies and private industries to ensure that the said initiative will be further realized. Moreover, the findings denote that the schools are preparing and developing the skills of students which are considered essential for employers. As part of

placement services in schools, they must equip students with skills employers preferred the most in order for them to be employable [12].

C. Differences in the Assessments on Guidance Services

Table 3 presents the differences in the assessments of the school administrators, teachers and students on guidance.

TABLE 3
Students' Awareness to Curriculum Exits

<i>Curriculum Exit</i>	<i>Fc</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Ho</i>
Career Information	27.121	0.000	Reject
Career Education	25.319	0.000	Reject
Career Counselling	28.442	0.000	Reject
Employment Counselling	32.222	0.000	Reject
Job Placement	35.418	0.000	Reject

As can be seen in the table, there are significant differences in the assessments of the school administrators, teachers and students on guidance services relative to career information, career education, career counselling, employment counselling, and job placement. The said services got the corresponding Fc of 27.121, 25.319, 28.442, 32.222, and 35.418. With the same p-value of 0.000 that is lower than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The data clearly suggest that the three groups of respondents have a different understanding and varied experiences when it comes to the implementation of guidance services in schools. Perhaps, the variation on the assessments by the three groups of respondents are based on the roles they play in the conduct of Career Guidance Program in schools.

The school administrators, as the overall in-charge of the program, oversee the effectiveness of the activities stipulated in the conduct of the said endeavor. On the other hand, the teachers serve as the facilitators and guide in the quest for students' self-discovery and appreciation of their skills and potential in relation to their aspired career and profession, while the students serve as the beneficiaries of the program.

Moreover, the differences on the assessments of the respondents may be affected by several factors, such as the interest and engagement of students to guidance services, competencies of teachers in facilitating CGP-related activities, and the commitment of the school administrators in implementing guidance programs in their school.

Specifically, the effectiveness of the implemented guidance services in schools lies on the cooperation and active involvement of students in the pursuit for their career development. The activities stipulated in the school-based CGP will be compromised if students do not see it as relevant to their career goals. Hence, it may result to lesser engagement and participation elicited from students.

Meanwhile, the capabilities of teachers in implementing CGP also predicts its success. The activities for CGP will be ineffective and inefficient if teachers lack skills in assisting the educational, vocational and career needs of students. They must be able to assess carefully the skills, aptitudes, interests and inclinations of students in order to provide them with appropriate service and intervention based on their felt needs.

Similarly, the overall impact of CGP offered in schools will be forfeited if school administrators are not committed and dedicated in implementing the best possible guidance services, programs and learning experiences for students. The implications of poor participation and involvement in career guidance activities affect students' career decision. Thus, the implementation of CGP in schools must incorporate the coordination of all concern stakeholders.

Even though the respondents have varying perceptions on how these services are being implemented, it should be noted that their aims and purposes must not be taken for granted. Since a guidance service provides an array of opportunities to cater the developmental and career needs of students, it should always serve their best interests. It must facilitate career goal setting and planning and effective decision-making among students.

D. Curriculum Exit-based Career Counselling Module

The proposed module entitled “**Career Counselling Module for 21st Century Learners**” is designed to strengthen the awareness of students to SHS curriculum exits and intensify the implementation of the guidance services conducted in schools. Its main purpose is to make the students more enlightened on what to do and where to go after Senior High School. Likewise, the said module will be used to supplement the existing one provided by DepEd. It is composed of lessons based on the curriculum exits of the students. The module contains learning objectives, student outcomes, teaching strategies and learning activities, assessment criteria and evaluation [13]. Specifically, the activities in Lesson 1 features higher education as a curriculum exit while Lesson 2 focused on middle level skills development. Lesson 3 is intended to make students more aware on the nature and facets of entrepreneurship as career pathway; whereas, Lesson 4 centered on activities relating to employment after SHS graduation.

Each lesson is composed of several parts such as the overview, lesson objectives, student outcomes, the 4As (activity, analysis, abstraction and application), evaluation, and reflection. The overview introduces the nature and the activities stipulated in the lesson to the module users. It also includes the brief discussion of the relevance of the intended guidance service to students' chosen curriculum exit. The lesson objectives and student outcomes enumerate the list of

skills intended to be developed and the tasks to be accomplished within the lesson.

In addition, the activity is intended to stimulate the users' attention and motivation by providing learning tasks that facilitate understanding of the relevant career information to their chosen curriculum exit. While the analysis includes tasks that will help users to acquire deeper understanding on the concepts integrated in the activity. The application is intended to make them utilize the learned concepts in real life context. Abstraction provides several reading materials and activities that will summarize the entire concepts tackled from the first 3As. Evaluation pertains to the learning tasks that will ensure the attainment of the stated lesson objectives. Meanwhile, the reflection part ascertains the impact of the given lesson to students' career planning and development.

The module is intended to be implemented a month before the closing of the school year, because it will supplement the conducted CGP in school. Each lesson is purposefully designed to be administered for an hour. The designed module is a self-help module for students, requiring teachers to act as facilitators in its implementation. Hence, teachers will be tasked to oversee the implementation of the module with the support of the school heads. The researcher suggests that teachers must first undergo a walkthrough-training on the utilization of the module prior to its implementation to ensure that it will be effectively administered.

This module can also serve as instructional resource for career advocates in delivering career guidance services for students. It will help them administer their CGP-related lessons more effectively and efficiently. Through this module, students will not only be given the opportunity to understand the nature of their aspired career pathway and profession, but also be able to appreciate their own knowledge, skills, and values.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based from foregoing discussions, most students are moderately aware on the four curriculum exits namely higher education, middle level skills development, entrepreneurship, and employment. The school administrators, teachers and students assessed that guidance services such as career information, career education, career counselling, employment counselling, and job placement are moderately implemented in schools; hence, their assessments differed on the implementation of the said services. The proposed module entitled “**Career Counselling Module for 21st Century Learners**” is a self-help module for students that contains lessons anchored on the SHS curriculum exits.

The researchers recommend that the proposed module may be used to intensify the implementation of the guidance services conducted in schools. The schools may conduct exhibits and expositions to feature the various interests and

inclinations of students and to boost their confidence. They may also seek partnerships and encourage involvement from external stakeholders, private sectors and industries in delivering guidance services for students. Similar studies may likewise be conducted to further identify the problems encountered in implementing guidance services in schools and to assess the career and employment needs of students.

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